

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

Approved For Release 2008/02/15 : CIA-RDP81B00401R002000160002-4

CONFIDENTIAL (SECRET--XGDS(1) Attached)

July 28, 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR:

The Vice President
The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
The Director, Office of Management
and Budget
U.S. Representative to the UN
Director, Arms Control and Disarmament
Agency
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Agenda and Papers for PRC Meeting
July 31, 1978

Attached herewith are the agenda and discussion papers to be used for the PRC Meeting scheduled for Monday, July 31, 1978, 4:30-6:00 p.m., in the White House Situation Room. Tab 1 to the Agenda Paper, Intelligence Assessment, will be forwarded under separate cover.

Your TAB B

Christine Dodson
Staff Secretary

Attachments

NSC review completed

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PRC Meeting on Somalia
July 31, 1978

AGENDA PAPER

The sole issue for consideration is whether we should continue to pursue a military supply relationship with Somalia; most immediately, we need to decide how to proceed with respect to a military survey team visit to Somalia.

Attached are an intelligence assessment (Tab 1) and an options paper (Tab 2).

Background and recent developments:

-- On April 29, Somali President Siad provided in writing the assurances we had requested that Somalia would not use force against its neighbors. In early July, Siad informed us through his Ambassador of his intention to rein in the Ogaden insurgents following the (now-concluded) OAU summit;

-- A high level of insurgent activity has in the meantime resumed in the Ogaden, Somalia has vocally supported the insurgent cause (including through Siad's OAU summit pledge of "moral and material" support for liberation movements), and [redacted] continued Somali logistical support (including arms) and training for the insurgents;

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-- Ethiopia has reacted sharply to the resumed high level of incidents in the Ogaden, including air-raids on Somali towns and, [redacted] planning for a retaliatory ground strike into Somalia;-

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-- On July 3 we informed the Somali Government of our decision to delay "for at least two weeks" the visit of a U.S. military survey team that had been scheduled to arrive in Mogadiscio on July 10. We were concerned that the team's visit might have been interpreted as U.S. acquiescence in continued Somali support for the Ogaden insurgents at a time of escalated violence in the Ogaden.

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-- The Somalis have communicated their urgent desire for some tangible demonstration of U.S. support in the defense field. They have invited U.S. naval ship visits, the accreditation of a U.S. military attache, etc. (a ship visit is being scheduled as a means of maintaining momentum in the U.S.-Somali relationship pending further decisions). Siad has told visiting congressmen and European leaders that time is running out for a U.S. response, and has wondered aloud if the U.S. delay is not consciously intended to undermine his position.

-- We are under pressure from the Saudis, Egyptian President Sadat, and the Europeans to proceed with a military relationship with Somalia.

Attachments:

- Tab 1 - Intelligence Assessment.
- Tab 2 - Options Paper.

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PRC Meeting on Somalia
July 31, 1978

OPTIONS PAPER

ISSUE: Should we continue to pursue a military supply relationship with Somalia?

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS:

Factors favoring steps toward a military supply relationship with Somalia:

- To consolidate the Western position in Somalia;
- To preempt the possibility of a Somali accommodation with the Soviets (either under Siad or, more likely, a pro-Soviet replacement);
- To defer to the desires of our European allies (the Germans and British have urged us to proceed with the survey team visit; the French have told us they are themselves considering providing "defensive arms" to Somalia);
- To demonstrate U.S. willingness to resist Soviet penetration of the region (President Sadat, President Nimeiri, Saudi Crown Prince Fahd, and other conservative leaders in the Middle East favor U.S. support for Somalia);
- To (conceivably) provide us with the leverage to end Somali support for Somali irredentism.

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Factors opposing steps toward a U.S.-Somali military supply relationship:

- Our association with Somali irredentism and/or aggression against its neighbors could damage U.S. interests elsewhere in Africa;
- A major Ethiopian reprisal action within Somalia, resulting from continued Somali support of the Ogaden insurgents, could place the U.S. in a very difficult position if we had established a military relationship with Somalia;
- Unrealistic to expect Somalia to disassociate completely from the Ogaden insurgency;
- Would alarm the Ethiopians, and, to a lesser degree, the Kenyans, who would view any U.S. move toward Somalia in the military field as harmful to their interests if not a directly hostile act (Ethiopia has threatened to break relations should we supply arms to Somalia);
- If Siad is toying with a military relationship with South Africa (Ethiopia has publicized reports to this effect), the political costs of our proceeding in the military fields with Somalia would be virtually prohibitive;
- Siad's failure to obtain U.S. arms might undermine his regime, leading to his replacement; a successor might be more willing/able to establish the conditions which would permit us to have a military relationship with Somalia.

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THE OPTIONS

1. Offer Somalia an impact package of military equipment, without sending a survey team.

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- Demonstrates to Somalia and the Saudis et al our willingness to counter Soviet actions in the area;
- Fulfills our earlier offer to Siad of a \$10-15 million immediate impact package;
- Avoids the potential problem of a survey team recommending more in the way of military supply than we might be prepared to provide.

Con

- Would be difficult to explain to Congress, which has been told we intend to send a survey team before deciding on a military package;
- Could stimulate further Somali requests, possibly including renewed demands for aircraft, artillery and tanks;
- Would strongly provoke the Ethiopians (and Kenyans), who would view this step as reflecting a deliberate U.S. decision to provide a dramatic gesture of military support to Somalia;
- Providing FMS financing, if necessary for the package, would be extremely difficult (reprogramming for Kenya has already strained FY 78 resources, and the FY 79 budget is highly uncertain in view of the 20 percent reduction in the House appropriations bill).

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no date

2. Reschedule the survey team's visit, while reiterating to the Somali Government that further evidence of Somali involvement in the Ogaden might again force postponement. (We would stress to Siad that we were setting the date sufficiently far ahead--e.g. four weeks--to enable him to implement his stated intention of reining in the Ogaden insurgents after the OAU summit.)

Pro

- Provides a positive response to Siad, the Saudis et al, demonstrating U.S. good faith and maintaining momentum in the U.S.-Somali relationship;
- Sets a specific time period for both sides to decide whether to proceed with the relationship on the basis proposed;
- Brings pressure to bear on the Somali Government to curb the insurgents;
- Preserves our ability to pull back if the situation on the ground develops in unacceptable ways.

Con

- Unlikely to result in an unambiguous improvement of the situation in the Ogaden, thereby requiring a further difficult go/no-go decision as the new date approached;
- Would again raise Somali expectations of U.S. support, possibly to unrealistic levels;
- If we ultimately again postponed the visit, this would be seen by Siad as proof of U.S. unreliability or even a deliberate attempt to humiliate and weaken him;
- Would provoke the Ethiopians (and Kenyans).

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3. Inform the Somali Government explicitly of the conditions under which we would be willing to send the survey team. (In addition to the basic requirement of no military support for the insurgents, our conditions could include Somali restraint in public declarations of support for the insurgents, a public statement or other steps showing Somali Government interest in discussions with the Ethiopians on the border question, or even the stationing of observers to monitor Somali dealings with the Ogaden insurgents.)

Pro

- Removes the ambiguity in the current situation;
- Places the responsibility on the Somali side, rather than the U.S., for any continued deferral of the team;
- Brings pressure on Somalia for restraint in its relations with both the Ogaden insurgents and Ethiopia;
- Demonstrates U.S. interest in a peaceful resolution of the Ogaden conflict.

Con

- The conditions would be very difficult both to implement and to monitor; if the Somalis were to agree to the conditions we would probably again be faced with the necessity of deciding whether to send the team under ambiguous circumstances;
- Faced with additional conditions for a military relationship after he had met our previous conditions, Siad could well conclude that we are not seriously interested in pursuing a relationship with him but rather in undermining his position in Somalia;

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- Siad might further conclude that Somalia cannot meet our conditions, thus cannot expect to acquire from the West sufficient arms to enable it to defend itself and must, therefore, seek its security through an accommodation with the Soviets;

- The Saudis et al and some of our European allies would be disappointed.

4. Defer any decision on the survey team.

Pro

- Buys time (our position with all concerned would be that we are still reviewing the situation.);

- Ambiguity in the present situation may be in our interest, keeping both Somalia and Ethiopia uncertain of our intentions;

- Should we ultimately decide that we cannot pursue a military supply relationship with Somalia, offers a tactical alternative to directly informing the Somalis (and others, including Somalia's enemies) of a negative decision.

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- Is unlikely to help resolve our basic dilemma of whether to send the team or not;

- May not buy much time, and will further enhance Siad's suspicions of our intentions.

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5. Cancel the survey team outright and inform Siad that U.S. will not enter into a military supply relationship with Somalia.

Pro

- Avoids prolonging unrealistic Somali expectations of U.S. military supply, and corresponding frustration over U.S. delays;
- Allows Siad to devote his efforts to making other arrangements for military supply;
- By leveling with Siad, preserves U.S. credibility in our dealings with Somalia;
- Would be reassuring to both Kenya and Ethiopia;
- Would bring pressure on Somalia to seek negotiated settlements with its neighbors.

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- Would be seen by Siad as reneging on our offer of aid, and perhaps as a deliberate attempt to humiliate or weaken him;
- Could de-stabilize Siad's regime by demonstrating his inability to procure external military assistance after cutting ties with the Soviets;
- Could influence Somalia in the direction of an accommodation with the Soviets;
- Would be viewed by the Saudis and some others as showing lack of U.S. resolve;
- Would be seen by Ethiopia as justifying its reprisals against Somalia for Ogaden incidents, inviting further reprisals.

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6. Take other actions to demonstrate continued U.S. interest in the U.S.-Somali relationship.

These actions could be combined with any of the previous options, and could include:

- open an attache office; tell Somalis the Attache has authority to discuss arms supply;

- expedite expansion of our development assistance to Somalia;

- pursue of Congressman Leggett's proposal for a series of major development projects in Somalia to be managed by the Corps of Engineers with Saudi financing (both the Somalis and the Saudis expressed moderate interest in this concept when Leggett floated it during his recent visit to the region).

Pro

- Would provide visible evidence (to both the Somalis and others) of continuing U.S. interest in Somalia;

- Offers the basis for a continuing U.S.-Somali relationship (with or without an additional military supply aspect) which could both be of benefit to Somalia and help maintain Western influence.

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- Would not be considered by Siad (or other Somali leaders) as an adequate substitute for a defense supply relationship, which remains the primary interest of the Somali Government at this time.

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28 July 1978

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27 July 1978

ASPECTS OF THE ETHIOPIAN-SOMALI SITUATION

Introduction

This assessment has been drafted by the NIO/AF following consultation with a group of working-level analysts and specialists in the intelligence community. It responds to questions put by the Africa Bureau of the Department of State in preparation for a review of US policy regarding arms transfers to Somalia.

Who is Fighting in the Ogaden?

The guerrilla warfare in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia is being carried on by ethnic Somalis and other indigenous irregulars supported by cadre and advisors from the regular Somali army.

The total number of irregulars who are available for armed action is not known, but we estimate it to be in the range of 15 to 20,000. The character of the warfare makes it impossible to estimate how many of these are actively engaged at any one time, and our figure includes guerrillas who cross back and forth over the border. This figure is substantially higher than the number of irregulars we estimated a year ago or even six months ago; the increase is due both to new information raising the size of the guerrilla forces and to re-evaluation of who and what a guerrilla is, in this situation.

Our estimate of the Ethiopian force opposing the guerrillas in the same region is much firmer -- 75-80,000 (of which 16-17,000 are south of Jijiga in the Ogaden, and 22,000 in Bale-Sidamo) plus 8,000 Cubans (all currently located in the Jijiga, Harar, Dire Dawa area).

Somali Support

The Somali army's support apparatus for the guerrillas was re-established in April 1978 along lines very close to those which had been developed in the period prior to early summer 1977, when the then guerrilla forces were subordinated to the Somali army. Two groups of Somali regular military personnel are involved:

There are also signs that Siad is continuing to solicit foreign support for the guerrillas, even while the guerrillas complain that he has stood in the way of their receiving such support directly. We believe that Egypt, and possibly China, are responding to Siad's approaches. It is extremely difficult, however, to distinguish foreign arms transfers to the Ogaden guerrillas from materiel arriving for Somalia's own use, although mines and anti-tank rockets, neither of which are produced in Somalia, evidently are being used by the guerrillas along with small arms. [redacted] 25X1

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If Siad chose to "turn off the valve," to cut off supplies from the guerrillas and remove Somali personnel now supporting them, we believe there would be a gradual, rather than immediate or total, cessation of guerrilla activity. He is not in a position to order such a cessation, even for a short period, unless the guerrillas could be persuaded that clear and substantial benefits to their cause were immediately at hand. Moreover, the benefits he promised would have to materialize almost at once if his order were to continue to be obeyed.

As we see his situation, however, Siad is impelled to continue to support the guerrillas by several considerations aside from his personal inclinations:

- his generally less assured position in the wake of military defeat, which requires him to demonstrate that his leadership is not failing and that he is still actively pursuing a policy to which virtually all Somalis subscribe.

- his need to defend himself from the charge that he mismanaged the campaign against Ethiopia and that his political strategy is a failure; sentiment along these lines appears to center in elements of the Somali army, which are restive on other grounds as well, notably his turning to his own clan in his domestic appointments.

- his continued need for economic support from abroad, which he justifies on the ground that he is still in the field against the Soviets and their Ethiopian tools; this is an argument he uses especially with conservative Arabs, although the interest of the Saudis and others in the Ogaden itself has never been overwhelming.

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Closing the valve would thus be a major shift in policy which would put Siad in jeopardy, and this jeopardy would increase if he did not come up with some countervailing success of a striking kind. He is, however, a tough and wily operator, and he is taking steps to insulate himself from hostile elements inside and outside Somalia. He should not be counted out easily, whatever his difficulties.

If Siad fails to establish an arms supply relationship with the US, we believe he would not, by this development alone, be placed in jeopardy beyond where he is now, primarily because the Somali military do not have great expectations for the American connection. Siad's position would be more seriously endangered if he became unable to obtain substantial supplies of arms from any non-Soviet source -- Western, Arab, or private commercial. He is not yet in this situation, although he apparently is having to search farther afield for particular items.

Intelligence analysts see no specific candidate to replace Siad. On the whole, we doubt that any replacement would pursue a significantly different course in foreign relations, nor in regard to the Ogaden guerrillas. While we foresee that over time, and with some movement toward cooling the problems of the Horn generally, there should be some normalization of Somalia's relations with the USSR, we think a lurch to the left is unlikely as a result of a failure to obtain arms from the US. Moreover, there are no indications that the USSR is interested in modifying its policy to permit such a development at this time.

Ethiopian Reactions

If, as we expect, the guerrilla campaign in the Ogaden persists and continues to have Somali support, we believe the Ethiopians will be led to attempt to retaliate by military action on the ground as well as by an expanded air effort. While Soviet, and therefore in this instance Cuban, policy is a constraint on Ethiopian retaliatory action, we doubt that the Soviets can argue against a ground attack indefinitely, and we do not believe they would object strongly in any event to an operation in which a force hit guerrilla camps inside Somalia and then pulled out promptly. Cuban combatants would be unlikely to accompany the Ethiopians across the border but would probably be willing to support such an operation indirectly from Ethiopian territory. The Northern Somalia Liberation Front is also available to the Ethiopians, but we have no reading on how effective it would be.

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There are other constraints on Ethiopian action against Somalia. One certainly is the campaign in Eritrea, to which the Ethiopians' best forces are devoted and from which they could not be diverted without substantial costs. Another is the military posture of the Somalis in northern Somalia. While Ethiopian reconnaissance is reported to have found the road to Hargeisa wide open, and in a narrow sense this is likely accurate, our information is that the Somalis are working hard to reorganize their forces in the northern sector and that there are now significant defensive elements on the northern flank of what would be the Ethiopian axis of advance.

Despite Ethiopian warnings, we do not believe that the arrival of a US military survey team in Somalia or the announcement of an arms transfer agreement would bring a break in US-Ethiopian diplomatic relations. To some extent, recent press publicity re Ethiopian protests has made a stronger reaction more necessary psychologically, and some further limitation of the size of the US mission in Addis Ababa would be a strong possibility, particularly following an announcement of an agreement.

Kenyan Reactions

We believe the Kenyans have made their point about arms transfers to Somalia, and that the recent visit of the US survey team will mute their objections, even though they certainly have not changed their views of Siad or of Somalia's ultimate designs on Kenyan territory, and might use this development as an argument for additional help from the US.

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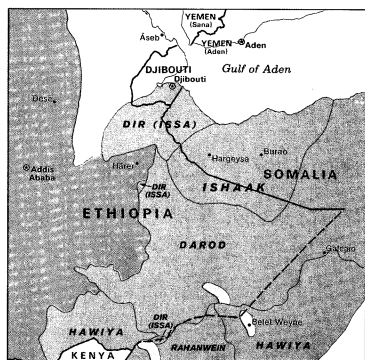
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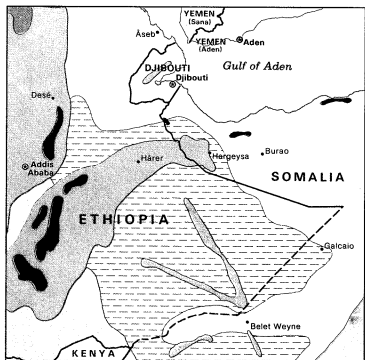
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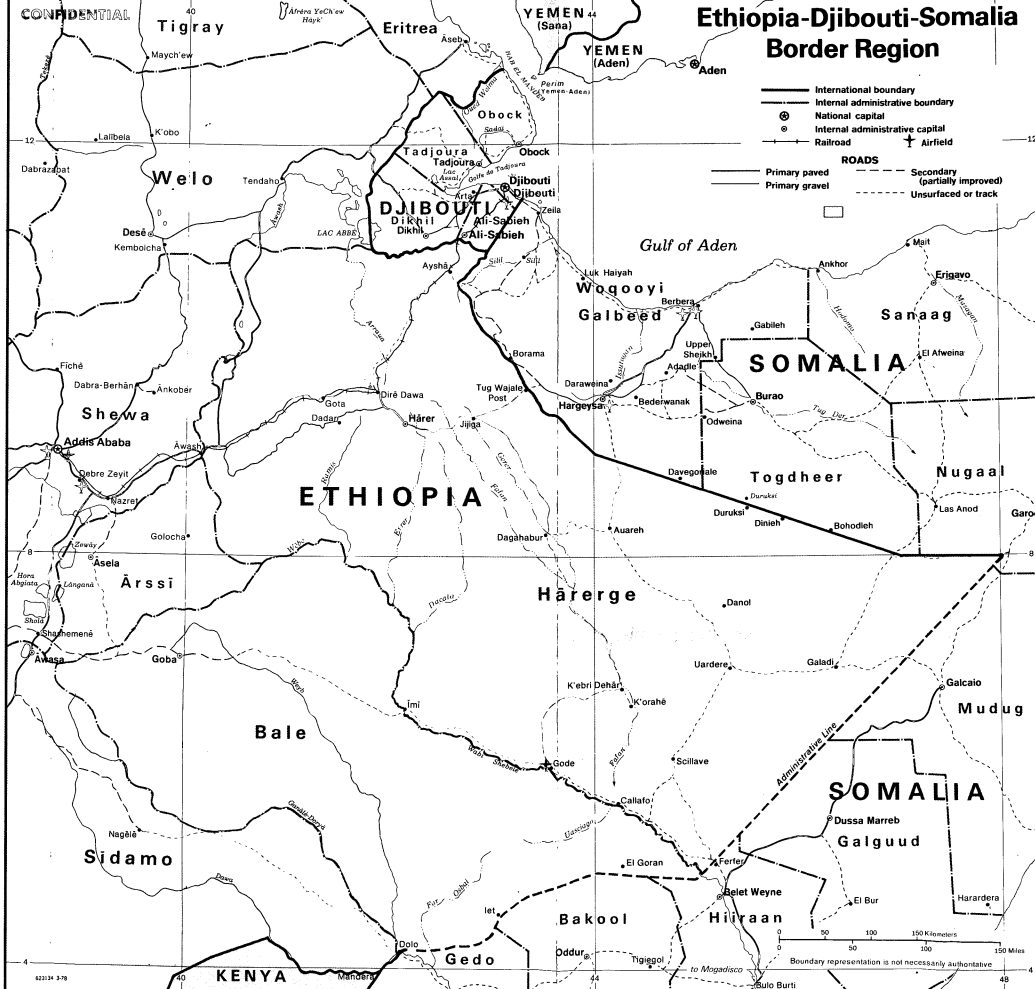
Ethnic Groups

- Afar (Danakil)
- Galla
- Somali
- DAROD-clan family
- Other



Vegetation

- Steppe and desert
- Tropical bush and thorn
- Savanna
- Tropical highland forest
- Riverine
- Upland grassland
- Deciduous woodland



Ethiopia-Djibouti-Somalia Border Region

- International boundary
- Internal administrative boundary
- National capital
- Internal administrative capital
- Railroad
- Airfield
- Primary paved
- Primary gravel
- Secondary (partially improved)
- Unsurfaced or track